





SEEKING UNDERSTANDING AS WRITERS

○ November/December 2010



BLOGGERS AND WANNA-BE
BLOGGERS:
START YOUR ENGINES



LEARNING MORE ABOUT
OUR INTERNSHIP
PROGRAM

WNY Young Writers'

studio

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

Seeking Understanding as Writers

A Note from Mrs. Stockman

At Studio, we help writers develop an appreciation for investigation. Much of what we do is all about discovery: discovering what we love, discovering how we hope to make a difference with our words, discovering what it means to be a powerful writer, and discovering how to collaborate well with others. Discovery is about seeking understanding and taking the time to learn what we need to about ourselves and about each other before we leap forward and dive into our work. Over the last several years, we've spent much time defining who we are and what we hope to accomplish as writers within the Studio community. This month, we've created several different opportunities for all of our writers to seek understanding about something else: the types of writing they are eager to produce, the way these genres are typically organized, and the research processes that great writers use to create quality content.

Many of the writers and teachers in our program are eager to begin blogging this year. Others have been doing this for some time and are hoping to improve their blogging practices and increase

readership. If this is you, your child, or even someone you might now who isn't involved in Studio, I encourage you to join us for Blogging Boot Camp beginning on December 1st. The best part of this experience? It's happening online, within the pages of the Studio blog. Participants can learn a lot, beginning creating their own blogs, and connect with others about blogging without ever leaving their homes! More details can be found on page three of this newsletter.

Our December sessions will focus writers on the task of organization. They will discover different ways to shape the texts that they began over the summer or during our first session this fall, and they will begin to understand that when we tinker with traditional formats, we can create innovative types of writing. Several Studio writers have accomplished as much over the years. I'm thinking of Matt Nichy, who began producing a video blog this summer (also known as a VLOG), Nina Stockman who is an avid graphic novel writer, and Tish Albro, who dove into some heavy research this year in order to produce a piece of fiction about the seven deadly sins and how they play out inside of a high school. The way she organized her text maximized her plot line and made a complex concept easy for readers to grasp. See the next page for her story!



Registration
is open year-round

If you are aware of a young writer or teacher who may want to join us, please feel free to invite them to join us one Saturday this year. If they enjoy their time with us, they can register as a fellow at any time.

More information can be found on our website:

<http://wnnyws.org>

We are also on facebook:

<http://tinyurl.com/2b2zasm>

How I Reached My Goal!

Studio Writer Tish Albro Explains How Research Informed Her Work and Helped Her Persevere as a Writer



Tish has been a fellow of our Daemen program in the past, but she currently writes with us at the Kenan Center in Lockport.

Tish is also a student at Lockport High School.

**Studio fellows can connect with her inside our online community:
<http://wnyywss.ning.com>**

On October 16, 2010, I went to Studio as usual for our first school year meeting in Lockport, New York. There, I talked with Mrs. Stockman about what I had been doing in order to meet my goals from the July summer sessions.

Since the summer sessions, I have been working on a story, like usual, but this one really seemed to meet the goal I made in the summer. My goal was to stop diving right into stories and to do more research on my subject. After Studio in summer, I started to get more interested in the Seven Deadly Sins and I wanted to write a story about them. I was especially interested in the constant Seven Deadly Sins versus Seven Heavenly Virtues war. I started to snoop around on the Internet to find more information, but I couldn't get enough!

Then, my Aunt came over for a few days and she mentioned that she was reading the book Dante's Inferno, or the Divine Comedy. At the time I had only vaguely heard about it, and I was interested. After she explained to me what it was, I was astounded. This book is about how an old poet, Dante, died and was guided through Hell, Purgatory and eventually Heaven by someone who was pretty much his idol. It explains all of the layers of Hell, and the layers within the layers, and it also explains the Seven Deadly Sins and what people do in order to land in certain levels.

Immediately interested, I went to the Lockport Public Library and checked it out. It took me about a month to actually get through, but I read the entire thing and increased my understanding of the Sins and the Virtues. Now, my story is about the war between the Sins and the Virtues, but it is in a high school setting. Each character has a Sin or a Virtue as the most dominant in their personality. But the war isn't just in the high school. There are internal wars, and wars between the Sin and the Virtue that involve contradictions. For example, the Sin Envy has a twin sister, the virtue Kindness. Envy has a crush on a guy from their school, but the guy does not like her. Instead, he likes her twin, which causes a war.

By researching this subject, my understanding of this topic has increased tenfold. Whenever I sit down to write this story, I am immediately excited for what is to come, because I know almost exactly what I need to write in order to make the story good. Of course, there is always room for development, though.

Wanna be a Blogger? Wanna be a Better Blogger?

Beginning December 1st, I will be hosting a Blogging Boot Camp on the Studio blog! If you, your child, or someone you know is interested in learning more about what blogging involves, how to create a great blog, and how to inspire others to read you, please plan to join us there over the next 8 weeks!

Here is how it works:

- Beginning on December 1st, I will be adding ONE instructional post about blogging to this space every Wednesday. Our weekly posts will provide:
 - Some instruction about one small part of the blogging process
 - A little bit of homework so that participants can practice what was learned
 - An invitation to connect and share their work with us in the comments section of each post. This will allow me and others to provide quality feedback and support on a weekly basis.

My intention is to keep things manageable, provide a whole week of practice time in-between, and monitor progress and needs as we go.

There are some huge advantages to learning this way:

- You don't have to leave home to learn!
- You don't have to show up at a particular place at a particular time—you can dive in anywhere, anytime!
- All of these posts will be archived forever, so you can begin the challenge anytime you want and even revisit it in the future if you choose to.
- There is no cost to participate in this experience.
- Teachers and young writers who aren't a part of Studio will be able to participate as well.

I am going to work as hard as I can to make Blogging Boot Camp a meaningful experience for bloggers of all age groups and experience levels.

Interested in joining us? Please let me know by leaving a quick comment on this post:

<http://tinyurl.com/2f3rt3e>

**You may also email me to share your interest or your questions.
stockmanangela@gmail.com**

See you in cyberspace!

Interns: Seeking Understanding about Powerful Teaching Practices



Studio Interns:

Nate, Jenna, Katie-Beth, Monica

Sarah and Laura

Missing From Photo: Alyssa Frey

This year, Studio fellow Sheri Barsottelli began leading our internship program. Sheri is a Special Education teacher, Literacy Coach, and member *of Communities for Learning: Leading Lasting Change*. Internship experiences are open to middle and high school fellows who have been a part of our community for at least one year and who have an interest in becoming teachers of writing. Interns set professional learning goals, create action plans to achieve them, study effective teaching practices, implement them, and engage in peer review of their performance.

Our interns have accomplished some amazing things! Several of them are correspondents for the neXt and the Buffalo News. Others are accomplished musicians and performers, well-known bloggers, leaders within their schools and communities, artists, and activists. Earlier this year, several of our interns attended the New York State Middle School Association annual convention as presenters and as pre-service teachers. They attended sessions beside other educators, learned a great deal, and have begun planning to use this expertise to create new opportunities for Studio fellows.

The internship application and review process begins each April. Those who are accepted engage in summer learning opportunities, attend and teach within the elementary Studio program, coach writers within our online community, and participate in collegial learning experiences with Sheri and myself. Studio interns are sponsored to participate in their own program as well, so they do not pay yearly fees. This spring, I anticipate opening two more internship positions. If this interests you, please consider talking with current interns about their experiences and applying this spring!